

Audio-Technica and Allen & Heath deliver Dante-enabled Audio

As the first higher education facility in the UK to bring an esports broadcast course to market, the University of Staffordshire has established itself as an industry pioneer offering students professional-level training in state-of-the-art facilities. The impressive spaces provided to students at the University's Stoke-on-Trent campus include a 60 seater esports arena, two broadcast galleries and well-equipped studio. Created as part of a recent multi-million pound expansion project, the facility can be run in parallel (with one gallery linked to the arena and the other to the studio), or as one large production suite.

Digital Garage (UK integrator and supplier) partnered with Audio-Technica on the audio components of the esports broadcast facilities. This was delivered via network solutions, including eight channels of Audio-Technica 3000 Series Digital wireless and two Allen & Heath Avantis digital mixers. With IP audio being crucial to ensure operational flexibility, Digital Garage turned to Dante-enabled solutions, as Tom Gill, the company's Design Manager, explains. "There are so many use-cases for the arena that we needed to design a very versatile space," he says. "We couldn't have one piece of audio kit connected to a single other piece of kit – everything needed to be able to "dial in" to any input or output across the facility. So it was fundamental to the project to have Dante at the core of the audio design."

“In addition to the networkable nature of both the Audio-Technica wireless system and the Avantis consoles, there were features that made them the ideal candidates for the project. For example, presenters generally use handheld microphones in the arena – because capsules on the 3000 Series transmitters are interchangeable, we could specify the C6100 hypercardioid option to avoid picking up unwanted spill from the PA.

“A big advantage of the Avantis mixers is they have certain broadcast-friendly features – things like tie-lines that many desks don’t have – which made them the perfect choice for this project. They really have everything built-in, so each console can stand alone, without involving a “surface-and-brain” set-up. The students really enjoy using the mixers and it’s extremely useful for them to be able to get experience on this level of professional gear during their degree courses.”

The Avantis consoles in the galleries are complemented by an array of additional Allen & Heath components including a trio of DT168 Dante-enabled 16-input/8-output expanders and two SQ-5 48-channel digital mixers. Extra control around the studio and other spaces is provided via six IP1 rotary and an IP8 8-fader controllers.

Summing up the investment in the new Audio-Technica and Allen & Heath solutions, University of Staffordshire’s Technical Services Manager, Richard Mortimer said that , “Our students need to be industry-ready, particularly in a fast-moving industry like esports broadcasting. So we’re not just bringing in technical kit for the sake of it, we’ve invested in equipment that our students will experience in the world of work,

ensuring that they're immediately employable post-university."

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